

# COUNTY OF SUFFOLK

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## STAFF REPORT SECTIONS A14-14 THRU A14-25 OF THE SUFFOLK COUNTY ADMINISTRATIVE CODE

**Applicant:** Southold Town Comprehensive Plan  
**Municipality:** Town of Southold  
**Location:** Town wide - Town of Southold, Suffolk County

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**Received:** 8/6/20  
**File Number:** SD-20-04

**Jurisdiction:** Adoption of Comprehensive Plan

### PROPOSAL DETAILS

**OVERVIEW** – The Southold Town Board has referred a draft of the Southold Town Comprehensive Plan to the Suffolk County Planning Commission. The Comprehensive Plan outlines a strategy to guide the future of Southold Town detailed in thirteen (13) distinct chapters.

The entire Southold Comprehensive plan document can be found at the following link:

[Link to Southold Town Comprehensive Plan online](#)

Quoting from referral materials provided to the Suffolk County Planning Commission by the Southold Town Board, the plan “includes policies for managing the Town’s expected as-of-right growth and for encouraging economic activity such as agritourism (e.g., farmstands, but without building). Currently, the Town faces issues including development pressure: traffic congestion; limited housing supply for workers; the need to preserve resources of natural and historic significance; and limited sewer capacity. The Comprehensive Plan includes a number of policies to address these issues, including small measures to improve stormwater management such as by exploring opportunities for Green Infrastructure. The draft Compressive Plan includes thirteen chapters including:

- Demographics
- Land use
- Transportation and infrastructure

- Community Character
- Natural Resources and Environment
- Economic development
- Housing
- Agriculture
- Land preservation
- Human services, natural hazards and parks and recreation.

The chapters are given an overview by an Introduction.

It is noted that the draft Town of Southold Comprehensive Plan does not include actions or zoning updates aimed at increasing development. The Plan does not include a recommend land use map or proposed zoning map and amendments. It can be stated that the purpose of Plan process and Plan initiatives is to better understand and address the potential changes and challenges facing the commercial and residential areas within the Town and make adjustments within the established land use pattern.

As noted in the referral material to the Suffolk County Planning Commission from the Southold Town Board the Planning Process for was a collaborative process including public charrettes, open Town Board meetings, and several public workshop and hearings on the initial and final draft plan.

## **STAFF ANALYSIS**

**GENERAL MUNICIPAL LAW CONSIDERATIONS** - New York State General Municipal Law, Section 239-I provides for the Suffolk County Planning Commission to consider inter-community issues. Included are such issues as compatibility of land uses, community character, public convenience and maintaining a satisfactory community environment.

The Town of Southold Comprehensive Plan continues to foster the compatibility of land uses within the Town and emphasizes the continuance of the existing community character and community environment. The Plan makes some analysis on the Orient Point Ferry and the motor vehicle trip generation and patterns thereby produced. Said impact is a public convince issue shared with the adjacent town of Riverhead and is noteworthy for continuous dialogue between the municipalities.

## **SUFFOLK COUNTY PLANNING COMMISSION GUIDELINE CONSIDERATIONS -**

The Suffolk County Planning Commissions has identified six general Critical County Wide Priorities that include:

1. Environmental Protection
2. Energy Efficiency
3. Economic Development, Equity and Sustainability
4. Housing Diversity
5. Transportation and
6. Public Safety

These policies are reflected in the Suffolk County Planning Commission Guidebook (unanimously adopted July 11, 2012). Below are items for consideration regarding the above policies:

Suffolk County Planning Commission Guidebook has a continuous underlying theme emphasized in section 4.7 under Specific Environmental Policies which indicates as a guiding

principal to “Promote development where it is deemed appropriate in downtowns, hamlet centers, adjacent to transportation and retail services and discourage development where it is deemed inappropriate within coastal zones, environmentally sensitive areas such as the Pine Barrens, unique ecological habitats and designated open spaces”.

It is the belief of the SCPC staff that the Town of Southold Comprehensive Plan includes the spirit and intent of the Commission Guidebook. It is also the belief of staff that more attention can be made to Energy Efficiency (e.x. orientation of new buildings, the use of rooftop or other solar devices, wind turbines, or geothermal methodologies, building materials, etc. for appropriate scale energy efficiencies). The Southold Town Comprehensive Plan would be strengthened by inclusion of such considerations. The Suffolk County Planning Commission has published guidelines on Energy Efficiency that can be found at the Suffolk County Planning Commission website.

The proposed Southold Comprehensive Plan should include a section that encourages (incentivizes) business owners and applicants to explore techniques to reduce parking demand; particularly for employers, employees and residents within the commercial business districts. Techniques may include, but are not limited to promotion of and priority to car sharing and ridesharing, parking cash-out programs, unbundled parking costs from rent, provision of free or discounted transit passes, provision of bicycle parking facilities, etc. The Suffolk County Planning Commission has produced a draft “model code” and report on such PSDR techniques and has recommended that no building or structure should be constructed, used or occupied without the adoption of Parking Stall Demand Reduction (PSDR) techniques conditioned, through covenants and restrictions, on land use and development approvals issued by municipal planning boards.

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The Town of Southold Comprehensive Plan would be more comprehensive and strengthened by inclusion of such considerations.

In addition, it is the belief of SCPC staff that more attention can be made toward Universal Design and on site public safety. The Southold Town Comprehensive plan would be strengthened by inclusion of such considerations. The Suffolk County Planning Commission has published guidelines on Universal Design and Public Safety that can be found at the Suffolk County Planning Commission website. Incorporation of appropriate elements contained therein could also improve the details of the hamlet planning initiatives. The Hamlet Plans would be more comprehensive and strengthened by inclusion of such considerations.

It is pointed out by the Town of Southold Comprehensive Plan that the Town of Southold has 20 zoning districts including 9 residential districts (some allowing agriculture and office use), 3 mixed-use residential and business districts and 6 others (e.g. marine, industrial, plum Island, etc.) each having its own set of rules as identified in the Town of Southold municipal Code. For some time, the Southold Town Local Waterfront Revitalization Plan was the guiding document for grown within the Town. In addition, a significant amount of pre-planning has preceded the completion of the Town of Southold Comprehensive Master Plan. Such initiatives include:

The Mattituck Watershed Study (2009)  
The Orient Historic District study  
Southold Historic District study  
The Peconic Estuary Comprehensive Conservation Management Plan  
The Long Island North Shore Heritage Area Plan  
2015 Suffolk County Agriculture & Farmland Protection Plan

## 2016 Town of Southold Community Preservation Project Plan

The Town of Southold has made significant progress in the development of a Comprehensive Master Plan. Relatively unique in its approach to planning is its pronouncement that the Plan does not include actions or zoning updates aimed at increasing development; but rather to redistribute potential as of right growth. It is important to note that the Town may follow up the completion of the Plan with updates of a recommended Land Use Map, zoning Map or adjustments to the municipal code. In addition environmental quality review will be needed for the plan and subsequent implementation aspects as noted above. Future implementation actions may require referral to the Suffolk County Planning Commission for review and action pursuant to New York State General Municipal Law (Section 239) and the Suffolk County Administrative Code (Article XIV). The Suffolk County Planning Commission reserves the right to comment on the specifics of any such referral. Approval of the Town of Southold Comprehensive plan does not constitute acceptancy of any other zoning actions associated therewith before any other local regulatory board.

### STAFF RECOMMENDATION

**Approval** of the Southold Town Comprehensive Plan with the following comments.

1. The Town of Southold has made significant progress in the development of a Comprehensive Master Plan. The completion of the Southold Town Comprehensive Plan will help to ensure that future development adheres to the stated goals of the various communities comprising the Town of Southold.
2. More attention should be made to Energy Efficiency (e.x. orientation of new buildings, the use of rooftop or other solar devices, wind turbines, or geothermal methodologies, building materials, etc. for appropriate scale energy efficiencies). The Southold Town Comprehensive Plan would be strengthened by inclusion of such considerations. The Suffolk County Planning Commission has published guidelines on Energy Efficiency that can be found at the Suffolk County Planning Commission website.
3. More attention should be made to Universal Design and on site public safety. The Southold Town Comprehensive plan would be strengthened by inclusion of such considerations. The Suffolk County Planning Commission has published guidelines on Universal Design and Public Safety that can be found at the Suffolk County Planning Commission website. Incorporation of appropriate elements contained therein could also improve the details of the hamlet planning initiatives. The Hamlet Plans would be more comprehensive and strengthened by inclusion of such considerations.
4. It is important to note that future implementation actions may require referral to the Suffolk County Planning Commission for review and action pursuant to New York State General Municipal Law (Section 239) and the Suffolk County Administrative Code (Article XIV). The Suffolk County Planning Commission reserves the right to comment on the specifics of any such referral. Approval of the Town of Southold Comprehensive plan does not constitute acceptancy of any other zoning actions associated therewith before any other local regulatory board.
5. The proposed Southold Comprehensive Plan should include a section that encourages (incentivizes) business owners and applicants to explore techniques to reduce parking demand; particularly for employers, employees and residents within the commercial business districts. Techniques may include, but are not limited to promotion of and priority to car sharing and ridesharing, parking cash-out programs, unbundled parking

costs from rent, provision of free or discounted transit passes, provision of bicycle parking facilities, etc. The Suffolk County Planning Commission has produced a draft “model code” and report on such PSDR techniques and has recommended that no building or structure should be constructed, used or occupied without the adoption of Parking Stall Demand Reduction (PSDR) techniques conditioned, through covenants and restrictions, on land use and development approvals issued by municipal planning boards.

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The Town of Southold Comprehensive Plan would be more comprehensive and strengthened by inclusion of such considerations.